



# A Practice Guide to **Overcoming Healthcare Hiring Challenges**

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**J**ust like any other business, in healthcare having the right staff can be the difference between a successful practice and one that's barely holding on. Finding, recruiting, and hiring highly-qualified healthcare professionals can be a struggle for small and independent practices, but with the right planning and resources it doesn't have to be.

In this eBook, we'll explore the struggles and challenges that practices can face as they seek to upgrade, build, or retain their team as well as provide solutions to those problems. We'll begin by discussing where the healthcare industry is today including current job growth, the surge of job openings and how your practice can manage the gap between positions that need to be filled and actually filling them. Then we'll explore some common hiring challenges, from labor shortage to the time and effort a practice needs to invest to find a quality team. Finally, we'll finish up with a discussion on how you can overcome these challenges and how a resource such as TalentCare can help. **Let's begin!**



## The Current State of the Healthcare Industry

Overall, the current economic outlook in the United States is favorable. With a GDP growth rate that's expected to stay within the ideal range of between 2% to 3%, unemployment that's expected to remain at the natural rate, and an ideal balance between inflation and deflation, the economy looks promising. A large part of this encouraging economic news is the expectation that total employment in the United States will increase by 20.5 million jobs in the decade between 2010 and 2020. This employment increase is going to be across the board with 88% of all occupations experiencing growth, but one of the industries expected to experience the fastest growth is healthcare.

Healthcare is definitely one of the best industries in which to be a job seeker, with plentiful positions available, many of which offer strong job security and good pay. The demand for qualified workers in healthcare is expected to go up by 19% by the year 2024 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is on top of the increases in the industry that have already happened. Currently, there are approximately 18.9 million healthcare workers, an amount that is nearly 4 million workers higher than in 2005. This type of increase is greater than what's been experienced in any other profession.

So why the disproportionate growth in the healthcare industry? For starters, the baby boomer generation began reaching the age of 65 over the past several years. This, paired with a notable increase in life expectancies, makes for a larger population of older Americans who are in need of health services. Another factor adding to the need for healthcare workers is the number of current healthcare workers retiring, leading to more open positions on top of the growth that's occurring. Finally, there's the Affordable Care Act. This legislation allows millions of people who otherwise wouldn't have been able to enroll in a health insurance plan to do so through the expansion of Medicaid in many states and the elimination of pre-existing conditions as a reason to refuse insurance coverage. This certainly adds to the number of people seeking healthcare and thus the need for workers to provide that care.

What all of this means is that a gap is coming. We are quickly approaching the time where there will be more open positions in the healthcare field than there are qualified workers to fill those positions. This means that the competition to be able to hire those candidates is going to be intense. Your practice will need to be strategic in determining what kind of workers you want on your team, what kind of practice and place to work you have to offer, and how you're going to connect the two. This is where you need to begin to think about the challenges that may arise and how you plan to overcome them.

# Common Hiring Challenges



## Labor Shortage

As we've already discussed, the healthcare industry is growing faster than qualified candidates are becoming available to fill open positions. This creates a labor shortage and causes anxiety for practices who face the uncertainty of hiring the wrong candidate because they need to fill the position and the competition to attract quality employees is so strong. This anxiety is well-founded. By 2025, it's expected that the US will face a shortage of around 29,400 nurse practitioners, 95,000 nursing assistants, 98,700 medical and lab technologists, and 446,300 home health aides. That's a lot of unfilled positions. As you can imagine, if more people don't start going into the healthcare field practices will have to really step up their game to attract the qualified candidates that are out there.

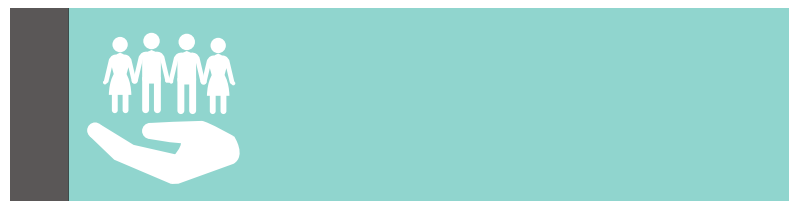
## Skills Gap

Along with the labor shortage of not having enough people in the healthcare industry, there's also the issue of a skills gap. The healthcare industry has been changing incredibly rapidly, particularly in the use of technology. This means that finding candidates with exactly the right skills to fill your particular position is a challenge in and of itself. Some of the top skills deficits in the healthcare industry currently are those related to software, programming, database administration, leadership, and strategy. This is important to bear in mind as you go through the hiring process so that you can determine what skills are necessary for your position and prioritize the skills that you absolutely want a candidate to have coming in, versus the skills that you feel you would be able to adequately train once a candidate is hired.

## The Expense of Hiring

Hiring is an expensive practice, no matter which way you slice it. Advertising positions comes with a cost, then there's the time that's used for reviewing resumes, setting up interviews, conducting those interviews, and deliberating on which candidate is the best fit. Once you've chosen a candidate, you'll want to spend more time checking references to be sure, and also likely have a background check and drug screen done. Then there's the possibility of hiring a recruiting firm.

Hiring a traditional recruiting firm, while one way to take some of the tasks related to hiring off your practice's plate, can come at a premium. Typically, recruitment agencies will charge a fee based on a percentage of the candidate's first year salary, only assessing the fee if that candidate is actually hired by the company. In 2014, the average fee for a recruitment agency came in around \$22,000 according to the 2015 Direct Hire Agency Benchmarking Report. Obviously, this sounds pretty steep. So why pay that kind of money? Most often, companies rely on recruiting agencies when they feel that the agency would have a better chance of finding the perfect candidate for their position, particularly within a tight time frame. It's important to remember though, when considering the use of a traditional recruiting agency, that the candidates they have available are often high-demand, meaning that they will come at a premium. So not only will you pay more for the candidate themselves, but remember they also come with that agency fee. At the end of the day, how you hire and how much it costs you boils down to what you can afford more of in your practice, either time or money.



# Common Hiring Challenges (cont'd)

## Time and Effort

As we said before, often how a practice decides to seek and recruit candidates depends largely on whether it has more time or money available. This is because hiring is a time-consuming process. Each time you have an open position, you need to go through the following steps to find the right candidate:

- **Create the job description:** The very first thing you need to do is create or update a job description that outlines the details of the position. This description must be clear so that candidates can see if they are qualified as they're applying and so that you have something concrete to compare applications to. Each job description should include the primary job function, duties and responsibilities of the position, education and experience necessary, the knowledge, skills, and abilities you'd like to see, and because this is healthcare the importance of having knowledge regarding HIPAA, strong customer service skills, and experience with the particular patient population in your practice.
- **Develop your recruiting process:** If you're going to find the best candidates out there for your position you need to be prepared with a plan. Before you even advertise the position, make sure you've developed your list of interview questions, decide on the type of interview methods you want to employ, create the advertisement, and decide where to post it.
- **Identify your qualified candidates:** Once you've advertised the position, the applications will pour in. Now you have to decide who makes it to the next step. To help yourself out, decide ahead of time a cut off date for applications to be received in order to be considered. Once that date comes, take your applications and sort them based on who definitely does not meet the minimum requirements for the position and who does. Then, go through those that do meet the minimum requirements and sort out the best of those. Keep sorting until you're down to about five candidates that you're going to interview.
- **Interview the candidates- twice:** Yes, that's right. Don't rush the process. Your hiring policy should always include two interviews. One interview is a good start and should give you an idea of who you might want to hire, but by the end of the second interview you should be certain as to who is the right fit.
- **Recruit your choice:** Now that you've determined who's the right fit, the first step is to let them know with a contingent offer. This is contingent because now you need to do a background check, physical and drug screen, check their references, and verify their credentials. Once they've passed all of those checks it's time to give them the formal offer letter and get set up for their first day. If this seems like it could take a while, that's because it certainly can. But the more your practice goes through the process and the more this becomes routine, the smoother it will go and the easier it will become.





# Overcoming the Challenges

## Faster Hiring

One of the concerns with regard to the amount of time the hiring process can take is the use of staff and resources that have other concerns to keep them busy and how that can add downtime to the hiring process. This is where having a dedicated recruitment team can be helpful. With a team of people dedicated to fill open positions, their focus remains on the hiring process allowing it to move along quickly, thereby getting you the staffing you need in a more timely fashion and lowering the odds that your first-choice candidate will get snapped up by a competing practice. Additionally, dedicated recruitment teams can be more specialized based on the role you're looking to fill and the job market in which you're looking to fill it. Again, hiring is a task where your own practice will need to determine what is of more concern to you, time or money. If the answer is time, which is often the case, it's worth it to find a cost-effective service that can assist your practice as you seek to find the best possible candidates as efficiently as you can.

## Evaluating the Best Candidates

Looking at resumes can be a subjective process. Even if you think you're objectively comparing each candidate's skills to what's needed for the position, subconsciously you're likely making judgments based on a variety of factors, from design of the resume to the candidate's email address and everything in between. Aside from this unintended bias, depending on how you've chosen to advertise your position it's entirely possible that some of the best candidates out there aren't even in your talent pool. Because you want to source the best of the best candidates and you want to be sure you're screening in such a way to be confident in your choice, this is where hiring a service can be useful.



## A Positive Hiring Experience – For You and Your Candidates

We've talked a lot about how busy the staff in your practice is, but the truth is that your candidates are likely just as busy. If your application process is lengthy and inconvenient, many candidates are likely to just keep looking. But if you leverage technology to your advantage, it's possible to make applying quick and easy for your candidates and also make analyzing the applications easy for you. Using a resource that is already set up with an efficient way for candidates to apply can allow your practice to leverage technology in a cost-effective and convenient manner over the prospect of investing directly in such technology at the practice level.



# Overcoming the Challenges (cont'd)

## Who Can Help?

While you might be tempted to think that your only two options are to do it all yourself or to hire a costly traditional recruiting firm, think again. TalentCare, offered through Henry Schein Solutions Hub, can use cutting-edge technology and predictive analytics to help you build an outstanding team, all while providing a positive experience for both you and your clients. TalentCare uses data to determine how best to advertise your position based on the role and your area. They use targeted candidate sourcing to find the perfect fit, plus they offer a retention guarantee.

## Conclusion

When it comes to hiring in healthcare, it's definitely a job seeker's market and that's only going to become more true as time moves on. This means that you need to sell your practice to the best candidates out there, attracting them with more than just the promise of a salary, but also with the hope of a shared vision. Hiring is a time-consuming process and it can be costly as well, but with intentional planning and the right help, you can certainly recruit and retain a strong team to help your practice achieve success.

Are you feeling overwhelmed at the thought of going through this process your own, or just convinced that you could use a little help to make sure you attract and keep the best team possible? TalentCare can help. Learn more by visiting [henryscheinsolutionshub.com](http://henryscheinsolutionshub.com) or calling **833-433-2482**.



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